7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1

FORMAL INSTITUTIONS

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

STORES

THE two stores which are not in the *safe* are small, specialized, and not always open. They will not be considered further. Another store building was closed throughout the period of study. The four remaining stores are located in the *safe*, two (under one roof) on the north side of the main road. One of these is owned by a man of lineage C,XVI, the other by a man of lineage A,III. The building itself is owned by a man of lineage C,XXI. The two stores on the south side of the main road are both somewhat larger than the other two and longer established, going back at least to World War I. Both are owned by members of lineage B,XII. All of these stores are "general stores" from the point of view of the merchandise they carry, and from the point of view of their function as meeting places for the men of the village.

In two of the stores, the one in building 8 and one of those in building 6 (see Fig. 3), the proprietor of each is regularly assisted by one of his sons. The other two work alone for the most part. (The son of one of the latter has recently opened his own store in Hilwi.) To some extent, there is some specialization. The gasoline-driven mill, mentioned earlier, is part of the store in building 8 whose proprietor, at the beginning of the study period, was employing a man of lineage A,VIII (his wife's brother) as miller. Grain was imported and ground to flour which was sold in the village and the Qumi. During the period of study, it was decided that this operation was not profitable, it being more practical all around to import flour. The proprietor of the store in building 10 is a butcher who both slaughters animals and sells meat. He also slaughters for the people in Jiddayil. The unassisted proprietor of the store in building 6 sometimes sells meat but does not slaughter animals himself. The proprietor of the other store in building 6, established for only one year, is the priest.

By and large, the stores carry the same goods at, apparently, the same fixed prices. There is no barter. Negotiations are carried out on a cash-and-carry basis, and every sale is recorded item by item. An informal and composite inventory includes the following: flour, rice, grain, peas, beans, coffee beans, sugar and nuts (set about on the floor in open sacks with prices per kilogram written on tags); vegetables and fruits (in season) set on the floor or large trays or in baskets; eggs, hung from the ceiling in wire baskets; various types of hard and chewy

7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1

place of one. Close friends of each proprietor frequently sit down with him to a game of backgammon or cards. Other customers while away several minutes with small talk whenever they make a purchase, and small groups of them often collect in the store, some sitting, some standing, to discuss the news, prices, and to exchange gossip. There is not a great deal more to it than this. The point is simply that the stores are not merely agencies for the transfer of goods.

BAKERIES

As has been noted before, there are two, rather widely spaced, bakeries in the village. Like the stores, they are privately owned economic institutions, and they are intensively used as loci of social interaction on the part of women just as the stores are on the part of men. Here the women meet regularly and for protracted lengths of time.

The women who regularly make their own bread (some do not make their own but buy it) do not do so every day. Depending upon the amount she needs to feed her family, the housewife will make bread anywhere from once every three days to once a week. Each time she will spend two or three hours in the bakery with four or five other women. Standing outside one of the bakeries, one hears intermittently the crackle of brushwood just put on the fire, and constantly the women's chatter, laughter, and sometimes singing, accompanied by the rhythmical slapping of hands and dough on stone.

The interior of the bakery in the *sahe* is rather dark since it has no windows and only two narrow doors. The building is trapezoidal in shape, with the oven in the narrow end. The oven is a large rectangular masonry structure, with one aperture on the side at a convenient height above the floor of a small pit in which the baker stands. The floor of the interior of the oven is smooth stone or concrete. The fire burns on the left-hand side of this floor. Between the oven and the doors there is a large stone slab raised about a foot off the floor. Around this half a dozen women can sit and work comfortably. To the right of the table and the oven, between them, there are several bins into which the baker tosses the loaves as they come from the oven.

The woman prepares her dough at home, making the necessary number of fist-sized lumps each of which will be made into a loaf. These she then takes to the bakery on a large tray carried on her head. The women form their lumps of dough into disks about a foot in diameter by slapping and kneading them against the stone table. The operation does not call for the same kind of skill which is required in preparing another type of "mountain bread" which used to be made in *Munşif* and can still be found easily enough in some other villages, a loaf as much as two and a half feet in diameter. The baking technique is different, and only one loaf at a time can be done.

The baker is equipped with an elongated wooden paddle upon which five disks

7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1

at a time can be placed. The whole thing is inserted into the oven, and the disks are shaken off the board. After about a minute in the oven, bubbles appear on the surface of a disk, and then the whole thing puffs up until it looks like a large pin-cushion. It remains in the oven about a minute more and then is removed. As soon as a loaf begins to cool, it collapses into disk form again, only now the disk consists of two layers except around the edge.

In each bakery, the baker is the only hired professional. In the bakery in the *hāra*, the owner provides the baker with bread for his own consumption and pays him the equivalent of about a dollar and a half a day. In the other bakery, the baker and owner split the bread receipts (see below) of the bakery fifty-fifty, but there is no monetary transaction between them.

Every woman who uses the bakery sets aside about seven per cent of the loaves she makes, and these she "leaves for the *furn*." The owners' own bread supply is thus supplied them, and they are free to sell or otherwise dispose of what they do not eat. The Mawali women, mentioned earlier, work in the *furn* on the same basis as the other women, but they regularly prepare more bread than they need themselves and sell the surplus at about twenty-five piasters (about seven cents) per *rațl* (the *rațl* is a traditional weight-measure equivalent to about 1 lb. 3 oz.).

OLIVE PRESSES

The presses are privately owned but are available to all, the owner receiving certain proportion of the oil which each individual presses. As social institutions they are, of course, far less important than the stores and bakeries, for they are used for only a few weeks a year, during the olive harvest. However, as has already been suggested, the olive harvest is a period of intense cooperative activity in which social interaction, spurred on by hopes of a profitable crop, is very lively. The presses play an essential economic part in the proceedings and draw large groups of men together.

Most of the presses in the village are modern, machine-driven apparatuses requiring a minimum of manual assistance. There is, however, one old-style one in the stable of a house in the al-Wasatiyya section. Stone bins hold the fresh olives. There is a heavy wooden beam one end of which is attached, hinge-fashion, to the ceiling, the other end weighted with three large stones (called "bells"). A batch of fresh olives is placed under the weighted end of the beam which is raised by block and tackle and then dropped on the olives. The purpose is to reduce the olives to a mash which can then easily be transferred to a circular stone basin with a drain. On it a large, thick stone wheel is set upright. The wheel is secured to a revolving beam, one end of which is set into the ceiling. A subsidiary beam projects at right angles to the revolving one. To this a donkey is harnessed, and by walking round and round the basin, the donkey turns the wheel over the olive mash, pressing out the oil. This crude process involves considerable waste, hence